



Your Living Environment

Vol III Number 8

August, 1972

YOU SHALL INHERIT THE LAND??

Historians Toynbee, Durant and Pierenne have all observed that "nation after nation has *fallen* when it *emptied* the countryside and denied *agriculture* a rightful place in the scheme of things" (*Unforgiven*, Charles Walters, Jr., 1971, p. 308).

How serious is this problem in today's society and why does denuding the rural landscape of its people threaten the very *existence* of nations? Can man look forward to a solution to this problem? These are important questions affecting all of mankind and they will be answered in this issue of *Your Living Environment*. In looking at this worldwide social exodus you are going to see that it has spawned major changes in the mentality and life-style of each one of us. This is especially so in the spheres of *work, family* and *recreation*.

A WORLDWIDE PROBLEM

United Nations' *Food and Agriculture Organisation* puts this problem into historic and geographic perspective:

"While at the beginning of the industrial revolution, *less than ten percent* of the world's population lived in cities, in the coming century the *majority of the world's population* will consist of *urban dwellers*. Thus, in the course of not more than 300 years of human history man will have turned from an overwhelmingly *rural* to an overwhelmingly *urban* resident, both in the rich and poor countries" (Götz Hägmüller, *Ceres* Nov-Dec, 1970, p. 44). All emphasis ours.

Kingsley Davis, Director of International Population and Urban Research at the University of California observes and warns us that:

"*Urbanized societies*, in which a majority of the people live crowded together in towns and cities, *represent a new and fundamental step* in man's social [history.] In 1960, for

example, ... according to the U.S. Bureau of Census, 96 million people, 53 percent of the nation's population were concentrated in ... urbanized areas that together occupied only .7 percent of the nation's land. ... The large and dense ... urban population involves a degree of human contact and social complexity *never before known*. They exceed in size the communities of any ... large animal; they suggest the behaviour of communal insects. ... Neither the *recency* nor the *speed* of this ... development is widely appreciated. Before 1850 *no* society could be described as *predominantly urbanized*, and by 1900 only one — Great Britain — could be so regarded. Today, only 65 years later, *all* industrial nations are *highly urbanized* and in the world as a whole, the process of urbanization is *accelerating rapidly*" (The Urbanization Of the Human Population, *Cities*, 1965, pp. 4, 5).

In *Britain*, where the industrial revolution began, the drift from the land has been more gradual, though it has continued unabated for nearly 200 years. By now the agricultural population has plummeted to less than 4% of the total! So thorough has been the depopulation of the rural areas that one writer, discussing the problems of Britain's hill country, made this startling point:

"The upland areas, which cover nearly *half* the entire area of the country ... [contain a] total population less than that of a *single* large town." (*The Inviolable Hills*, Robert A. De J. Hart, London, 1968, p. 3).

Such a state of affairs is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that *Southern England* has *more people per square mile* than India or China!

In *Europe* — "since 1958 the number of people in the *Six* (EEC) making their living from farming has dropped from 17.5 million to 10 million ... the Commission estimate

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE, AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, RESEARCH NEWS

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE (U.K.) LTD.
Copyright © 1972 by Ambassador College
All Rights Reserved

that there will be a further drop of two million between 1972 and 1976" (*European Community*, February, 1972, p. 20).

In the *Third World* developing countries:

"urbanization started much later than in the industrialized nations, in many cases only one or two decades ago. . . [However] the poor countries are . . . urbanizing at a *greater rate* than the industrialized . . . nations *ever* did. . . To live in . . . *shantytowns* . . . will therefore be the rule rather than the exception by the end of this century" (Götz Hägmüller, *Ceres*, Nov-Dec., 1970, p. 44).

"Nowhere in *West Africa* is the classic drama of the drift from the rural areas to urban centres being more vividly played out than, perhaps, in Ghana. The *daily appeals* of the politicians and social leaders to the youth to '*go back to the land*' not only indicate the extent of the problem but also the *geographical background* of the urban unemployed. There is hardly any room in the labour exchange offices to file the particulars of the newcomers; the public parks swarm with aimless, hopeless people; the factories have become daily witnesses to the fading expectations of the persistent callers . . ." (Isaac Sam, *Ceres*, July-August, 1971, p. 41).

In February, 1971, Ambassador College representatives interviewed Tony DeChant, President of the U.S. *National Farmers Union*. Speaking only about the United States, Mr. DeChant observed that,

"In the last 20 years, 20 million people have left the farms and rural towns and moved to the cities where we already have 70 percent of the population on some 2 percent of the land and where we already have *insurmountable problems*, practically insurmountable, in terms of water, transportation, education, health, sewage disposal, whatever you want to name — the big cities are in trouble! And . . . *the migration continues*, [2,300 farmers] daily; so I think this *senseless migration has to be reversed*. We have to revitalize rural America, and disperse some of this high concentration we have on both sea-boards" (*Agricultural News and Research*, 15.3.71).

WHY THE RURAL EXODUS?

What was and is the cause of this mass migration? In modern times the industrial revolution was the initial spark that started the movement. The bait of *higher wages, less work* and the moth-like attraction of *neon lights* and *the crowd* are a counterfeit for *greener pastures*, but they nevertheless exert a strong influence in drawing humanity to the *cities!* At the same time there has always been a considerable element of *economic compulsion* driving men from the land. Historically this has resulted both from their own

wrong land management and misguided governmental policies.

History describes all too vividly Britain's rural conditions at the time of the industrial revolution. Above all else in contribution to the '*rot*' in the countryside was the attitude of the moneyed landowners. Lesser men and workers were regarded as tools to be used and exploited for personal gain. When it appeared economically favourable whole villages of people were ejected from the land — thus breeding a deep-seated resentment of the ruling classes.

It is interesting to note in passing that the oft-exploited human '*tools*' have now been replaced by machines (often made by unhappy slum-dwelling descendents of the original peasants). These machines of course give farmers less trouble, because no understanding of the laws that govern successful human relationships is required to operate them successfully.

In America, where land colonization and the industrial revolution occurred simultaneously, labour for the factories came from dispossessed small-farm families. American agricultural history is a chronicle of land and resource exploitation with the most successful exploiters remaining on the land and the unsuccessful being forced into the cities — their property being absorbed by the former. Even these '*successful*' farmers have supported only themselves! Most of their own sons have desired or been forced to seek their living in *the bright lights!*

A similar theme runs through the history of urbanization in other countries. Unfortunately the '*greener pastures*' of urban living and employment have always been fraught with problems. Physical difficulties of cities such as pollution, noise, sewage, water, transportation etc., receive justifiable attention, but the change from rural to urban life-styles has produced little-known crucial changes in the thought-pattern and *mentality* of urban dwellers!

THE URBAN MENTALITY

"From early childhood superabundant impressions, stimuli, and dangers make their impact upon the city dweller, who compared with the peasant or small-town shopkeeper, becomes a nervous, unstable, harassed, often pitiful being. Constantly driven back by the clock that ticks the time away and by the speeding motor car, pursued by evil-smelling, on-rushing traffic. The city dweller dashes to his place of work; and even in transit he is assailed by loud-coloured posters and constantly blinking neon lights, which pound into him that he must by all means, buy this or

look at that if he wants to keep abreast of the times.

"The always startling, ceaseless succession of impressions, the torrent of stimuli, and in the evening, radio music and television movies — all these reduce the city dweller to the level of an organism always on the lookout for newer, different, still stronger impressions — ready for the sanatorium, or in the end completely dulled and unable to be roused by anything.

"The consequence is *weariness* and *disgust*. It is a not uncommon attitude among the city dwellers, and the youths find it downright chic *not to be amazed by anything*. The German sociologist Georg Simmel found this weariness, this *'fancying oneself superior to it all'*, the most typical character trait of people living in large cities" (*Babylon Is Everywhere*, Wolf Schneider, 1960, pp. 321, 322).

It must be understood that Schneider's observations are not applicable to *every* city-dweller. They are broad generalizations of an over-all picture.

Author Lewis Mumford noted that *suburbs* were established so people could escape the stresses of city living, yet results are disastrous:

"The town housewife, who half a century ago, knew her . . . various . . . local tradesmen, as individual persons, with histories and biographies that impinged on her own, in a daily interchange, now has the benefit of a single weekly expedition to an impersonal supermarket, where only by accident is she likely to encounter a neighbour. If she is well-to-do, she is surrounded by electric devices that take the place of flesh and blood companions; the end product is an encapsulated life, spent more and more either *in a motor car*, or *within the cabin of darkness* before a television set . . . Here indeed we find *'The Lonely Crowd'*" (*The City in History*, Lewis Mumford, 1961, pp. 551, 552).

RECREATION — AN URBAN CRAVING

Artur Glikson, Head of Planning for Housing in Israel's Ministry of Labour states that:

"The more that *industry* and *cities expand*, the greater is the demand for recreation. . . . In the dynamics of city life, the demand for recreation represents a reaction against the . . . complexity of life introduced by centralization and industrialization. . . .

"It [recreation] is an attempt to balance urban concentration by a temporary escape back to the places of natural and historic origin of the people: to the indigenous and rural landscape, the hamlet, the little town by-passed by modern development, in the hope of restoring, or 'recreating' *health, energy and mental equilibrium*" (Recreational Land Use, paper presented by Artur Glikson,

in *Man's Role in Changing the Face of The Earth*, pp. 897, 912).

MAN'S NEW APPROACH TO 'WORK'

The urban environment has also bred a new approach and attitude to employment:

"It is clear that *'employment'* is no longer regarded as a contribution to the creation of social wealth, but rather as a kind of ticket entitling its holder to share in the distribution of that wealth. It [an urban job] has come to be regarded *as an agent of consumption* rather than of *production*. The mechanization of so many economic activities has built up the idea that the whole economy is in fact a machine, a machine in which the worker *naturally* wants to ride. . . .

"Since labour has so long been regarded as a commodity to be bought and sold in the market, the labourer can hardly be blamed . . . for believing that it is in his 'interest' to put in as little effort as possible and extract as much money as possible.

"Thus the natural instincts for which work forms an outlet are largely frustrated. Except for a relatively small class of technicians, there is little scope for *creativity*, for *design*, for *initiative*, even for *the gratification of a completed job*. Labour has been divorced from *living*; it is no longer a direct source of satisfaction, but simply *a qualification for a meal-ticket*" (*From The Ground Up*, Jorian Jenks, Faber and Faber, 1945, pp. 122, 123).

Even work in *agriculture* is now losing its job satisfaction at the rate it patterns itself after *industry!* Sir George Stapledon also noted this general change in attitude to work:

"To work *without interest in the final result*, or any *feeling of love* is to be denied the enjoyment of perhaps *the greatest pleasure this life has to offer*, and in the fact that such a high proportion of the workers of the world are denied, or deny themselves, this pleasure is to be found one of the chief *causes of widespread social neurosis*" (*The Natural Order*, edited by H. Massingham, Faber and Faber, p. 36).

THE DISINTEGRATING FAMILY UNIT

Perhaps the most important effect the rural exodus has had on each of us lies in the sphere of family life and unity:

"There can be little doubt that *family life* has deteriorated in *direct* proportion as the influence of the *father* has *waned*. The real trouble began when the man went out to work, went far from home to work, worked long hours, acquired outside interests, came home late, came home tired. This is the position in most homes today. It is essential that the *father* should associate himself *actively* with the lives of his *children*. If he leaves the house early and returns late, his

only chance to be an active parent occurs at the weekend. All too frequently the only interest of the family in the father is *'the bread'*, a most unhealthy state of affairs — a state of affairs which tends to make the father lead one kind of social life in one place, while the mother and the children lead *another* kind of life *elsewhere* . . . Under such conditions the family can have no proper roots . . .

"... the real point to be faced is that segregation of the individual from the family, and of the family from the community, has been carried to dangerous, not to say lethal, lengths; and it would seem that modern trends accentuate that segregation . . . the size of cities and of over-specialized industrial undertakings has outgrown their capacity to cater for the real needs of real human families and of real human individuals" (*Human Ecology*, Sir George Stapledon, p. 113).

PRESSURE FROM POLITICIANS

Perhaps the most sickening aspect of the whole matter is that so FEW *world leaders* and thinkers fully comprehend what this worldwide migration is doing to *human minds and lives!* Many have in fact mistakenly spearheaded the drive to push even *more* people FROM the land:

"The White House takes the view that only 1 million efficient farmers could produce all U.S. farm needs. Today there are 3.4 million farmers. Thus according to the White House, there are 2.4 million unneeded farmers" (*U.S. News and World Report*, March 22, 1965, p. 59).

That of course was the view of the Johnson Administration. But the present agricultural thinkers for President Nixon share this same general view.

In Europe, leading EEC planner, Dr. Sicco Mansholt has similar ideas:

"Mansholt proposed three objectives for West European farming by 1980: to *accelerate* the *drift* from the land, to *change* farm sizes *radically* [larger], and to balance out the supply and demand of farm products. It was argued that farming should be viewed simply as one among many economic activities *rather than as a way of life*. Mansholt envisaged that a total agricultural population of 5 million in *The Six* would be *desirable* in 1980. That would represent ONE QUARTER of the 1950 figure of 20 million which had since fallen to 15 million in 1960 and 10 million in 1970 . . . almost HALF of the 1970 total number of farmers . . . will have to *disappear during the coming decade*.

"Mansholt argued that *every effort* should be made to divert the children of farming families *away* from agriculture to take up *other* jobs. A second form of action would involve encouraging the elderly to leave farming" [presumably to become a charge against the state's welfare system]. (*Agriculture, Studies in Contemporary Europe*, Hugh D. Clout, Macmillan, 1971, pp. 55, 56).

Mansholt is now forging ahead with his plans — apparently unconcerned that he, like the American planners, is systematically destroying the very heart of a nation's social and economic foundations. At the same time the policy of the British Ministry of Agriculture was (and presumably still is) to *solve* the economic difficulties of its farming industry by a Mansholt-like amalgamation of every second farm!

As we explained in an earlier *Research News*, agriculture's chief purpose is *not* the production of *food*, but the production of *people*. It is designed to be a stable broad-based foundation of a God-designed society and economy.

IS THERE A SOLUTION?

Instead of driving and forcing more families to *leave* their rural environment, (especially when most cities have a pool of unemployed) even encouragement should be given to *reverse* the drift to the cities! It will take God to rectify this situation. Man will *not* do it! But it *will* be done and in the very next few years!

Some 3,400 years ago God set up a model society in which every man received land as his inheritance. Furthermore, God made it illegal for man to squander it by stating that:

"In the year of jubile [i.e. following seven Sabbatical Years] the field shall return unto him . . . to whom the possession of the land did belong" (Lev. 27:24).

Soon God will set it up again — this time not just for Israelites, but for everyone:

"So shall ye divide this land . . . for an inheritance unto you and unto the strangers that sojourn among you . . . YOU SHALL INHERIT THE LAND . . . one as well as another" (Ezek. 47:21, 22, 13, 14)!

Yes, God's laws of *land inheritance* and the *jubile* are to be reintroduced in the world tomorrow and then

"they shall sit every man under his own vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Mic. 4:4).